BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

BC Stats

Infoline

Contact: bcstats.infoline@gov.bc.ca Issue: 08-50 December 12, 2008

- **Exports jump 9.0% in October**
- **New motor vehicle sales unchanged in October**
- **Housing starts plunge 31.0% in November**

The Economy

- **Wages, salaries and benefits earned by workers in British Columbia inched ahead 0.6% (*seasonally adjusted*) in the third quarter of 2008.** Nationally, labour income advanced 0.8%. Alberta (+1.8%), Saskatchewan (+1.3%) and Nova Scotia (+1.3%) were the only provinces that showed increases above the national average. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The value of BC's exports totalled $3.1 billion (*seasonally adjusted*) in October, up sharply (+9.0%) from September following two months of declines.** While all commodity groups registered increases, a jump in the value of energy products (+13.8%) accounted for nearly half of the overall increase. Increased machinery, equipment & automotive shipments (+13.5%) as well as industrial & consumer goods (+8.4%) were also prime contributors to the rise in total value of exports. Exports of agriculture & fishing products jumped ahead by nearly one-tenth (+9.7%) while forestry products (+2.3%) were up more modestly.

  Exports to the US surged (+11.0%) in October with a significant rise in energy products (+34.7%) fuelling the increase. Exports to destinations other than the US rose 6.9% as demand for machinery, equipment & automotive goods (+26.4%) and industrial & consumer goods (+17.8%) shot ahead.

  Canadian exports inched ahead for the second straight month in October to $43.5 billion, up 2.5% from September's total. All sectors with the exception of automotive products contributed to gains made. The downturn in the automotive sector was reflected in Ontario's weaker export figures. *Data Source: BC Stats & Statistics Canada*

- **Lumber production by BC's sawmills continued to fall, dropping 16.9% in September compared to the same month a year earlier.** While production of lumber at Coastal sawmills nearly doubled (+97.9%) output at Interior mills, representing more than 85% of total production for the province, continued to slide (-23.2%). *Data Source: SC Cat no. 35-003-XIVE*

- **The number of new motor vehicles sold in British Columbia was virtually unchanged in October as increased sales of new trucks were completely offset by lower demand for passenger cars.** Nationally, sales were off 0.9% (*seasonally adjusted*) with eight provinces experiencing declining in sales. Only Saskatchewan (+5.6%) and Manitoba (+2.2%) recorded increased sales. *Data Source: BC Stats & Statistics Canada*

- **The number of housing starts in BC plunged 31.0% in November to 22,300 units (*seasonally adjusted at annual rates*), the second straight month of double-digit declines.** Nationally, housing starts were off 18.8%, with Ontario (-29.3%) and Alberta (-17.4%) contributing greatly to the decline. Starts were down in most parts of the country. *Data Source: CMHC*

- **British Columbia's New Housing Price Index (NHPI) declined 0.5% on a year-over-year basis in October, the first downturn observed since April 2001.** In Vancouver, contractors' selling prices decreased 0.4% while the price tag on a new home in Victoria slumped 1.1%. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

Report **Canadian Travel to British Columbia**

Did you know...
During its 2007 National Christmas Campaign, the Salvation Army raised $23 million in donations through online, mail and the familiar kettles. *Data Source: CNW Group*

The Environment

- **Roughly 45% of Canadian households lead a "very" environmentally active lifestyle in 2006, participating in at least four of six selected environmentally friendly behaviours.** Another 45% were considered to be "moderately" active, engaging in two or three activities with the remaining 10% considered "less" active, participating in only one behaviour or none at all. The selected environmental behaviours (and their participation rates) examined include: recycling (97%), use of compact fluorescent light bulbs (59%), use of low-flow showerheads (56%), lowering temperatures (54%), use of a low-flow toilet (37%) and composting (30%).

  The most "environmentally active" province was PEI, where nearly two-thirds (64%) of households were considered "very" active. Participation rates were lowest in Quebec and Manitoba where the number of "very" active households were roughly half of that in PEI.
  Data Source: SC Cat no. 16-002-XWE

- **Canada's household greenhouse gas emissions increased 13% between 1990 and 2004 and accounted for nearly half of the nation's total greenhouse gas production.** Direct emissions from motor fuel and residential fuel use made up roughly one-third of household-related emissions. Emissions from motor fuel use increased 29% between 1990 and 2004 while greenhouse gas emissions from residential fuel remained relatively stable during that time.

  Indirect emissions, those produced by industries to meet household's demands for goods and services, increased 11% between 1990 and 2004 and accounted for the remaining two-thirds of household-related greenhouse gas emissions. Production of electricity, food & beverages, restaurants & accommodation and motor fuels and lubricants represented 54% of indirect household emissions.
  Data Source: SC Cat no. 16-002-XWE

Crime

- **The nation's incarceration rate rose for the third consecutive year, increasing 2% to 117 per 100,000 population in 2007/2008 compared to the previous year.** On an average day, 36,330 adults and 2,018 youths (aged 12 to 17 years) were held in either sentenced custody or remand. The number of adults in federal prisons (those serving sentences greater than two years) grew 3% to 13,304 in 2007/2008, accounting for roughly four in ten adults in custody in Canada.

  Since the introduction of the Youth Criminal Justice Act of 2003, which requires that the final third of a youth's sentence be served in the community under supervision, the average number of young offenders in sentenced custody has fallen steadily. In 2007/2008, the number of youth in sentenced custody fell 5% and 36% fewer youth were in sentenced custody than there were in 2003/2004.

  Comparatively, Canada's incarceration rate of 117 per 100,000 population was somewhat higher than countries in Western Europe. Sweden, for instance, had an incarceration rate of 74 per 100,000 population. However, Canada's incarceration rate was substantially lower than that of the United States where the rate was 762 per 100,000 population for adults alone (US figures exclude youth from its incarceration rate).
  Data Source: Statistics Canada

The Nation

- **The value of Canada's foreign assets (+3.2%) increased more than its liabilities (+2.1%) in the third quarter, resulting in a net decline in the nation's international indebtedness to a 33-year low of $58.4 billion.** Although the Canadian dollar has been most notably depreciating against the US dollar and the Japanese yen in recent months, it has, in fact, been appreciating against other major currencies. As a result of these exchange rate fluctuations, for the year thus far, while the value of Canada's liabilities abroad have increased by $26.4 billion, the value of foreign assets held has increased $56.7 billion.

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For data originating from Statistics Canada, data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the catalogue number.

Infoline Report

Contact: Chad Stroomer
250 387-0377
Originally published in
Tourism Sector Monitor Issue 08-10

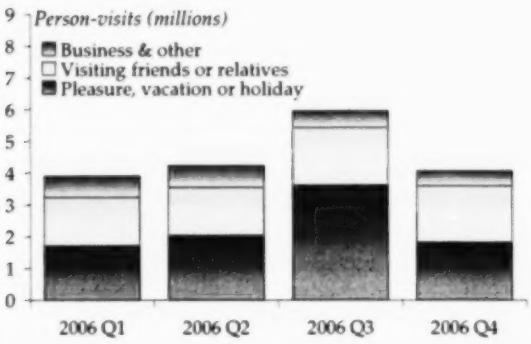
Canadian Travel to British Columbia

Why do Canadians travel to BC?

With more than 18 million person-visits in 2006, BC was the third most popular (after Ontario and Quebec) destination among Canadians travelling within their own country.[1]

There are a number of reasons that Canadians travel in British Columbia. Besides those that flock to the province in order to vacation here, others make their way to BC on business trips, while some are here simply to visit friends and family. In 2006, fully 51% of Canadians that travelled through BC reported that they were on holiday. Meanwhile, 36% were travelling through BC in order to visit friends and relatives and 13% had business or other reasons for visiting the province.

Vacationers accounted for more than half of BC's visitors in 2006



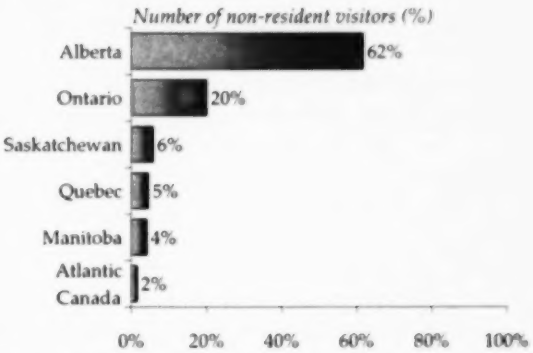
Data Source: Statistics Canada

Despite BC's—and in particular Whistler's—reputation as being "Canada's winter playground"[2], most pleasure visits occurred during the typically warmer second and third quarters. Travel to visit family and friends was slightly higher in the latter part of the year, which should not be too surprising considering that the Labour Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays all fall in the third and fourth quarters. Consequently, there was a lull in business and other travel during the holiday season.

Where are visitors travelling from?

While most (86%) travellers in BC are themselves British Columbians simply touring their own province, Canadians from coast-to-coast come to this province. Of those Canadians who visited BC from another province in 2006, nearly two-thirds (62%) were from our immediate neighbour to the east, Alberta.

Most Canadian visitors to BC come from either Alberta or Ontario



Data Source: Statistics Canada

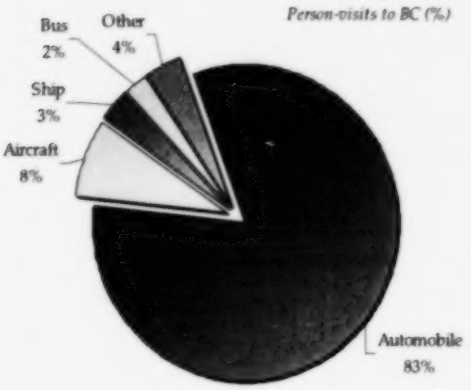
Ontarians were the second largest group, accounting for slightly more than one-in-five (20%) visitors. Residents of Saskatchewan (6%), Quebec (5%) and Manitoba (4%) made up most of the remainder with relatively few (2%) coming from Atlantic Canada.

[1] Data used in this article are from the Travel Survey of Residents of Canada (TSRC).
[2] "Steppin' Up", Canadian Geographic, Winter 2007.

How are travellers getting here?

Since most travellers in BC are British Columbians, it is not surprising that the most popular mode of travel within the province is by automobile, accounting for just over four-fifths (83%). Travel by car in BC is more prevalent among same-day visitors (95%) than it is among those that stay overnight (70%).

The automobile is the vehicle of choice for travellers in BC



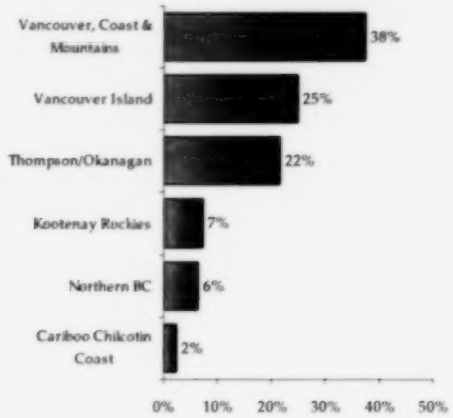
Data Source: Statistics Canada

Commercial aircraft is the second most common mode of transportation, serving around 8% of tourists in BC. Same-day travel by aircraft is very limited (less than 1%), but much more common among those who elect to stay overnight (15%). Other modes of transportation such as ferry serve comparatively fewer travellers.

Where in BC are travellers visiting?

Tourists in BC travel to all four corners of the province[3]. With BC's major cultural and economic centres along with the province's transportation hubs located in the Vancouver, Coast & Mountains and the Vancouver Island tourism regions, these areas see the lion's share of travellers to BC. In 2006, more than 18 million person-visits were recorded in BC with more than one-third (38%) being registered in Vancouver, Coast & Mountains, marking it as BC's most visited region. Around one-quarter (25%) of visits occurred on Vancouver Island and with nearly 4 million person-visits in 2006, Thompson-Okanagan was host to more than one-in-five (22%) travellers in BC.

The south-western regions of the province are the most popular with travellers in BC



Data Source: Statistics Canada

Kootenay Rockies accommodated roughly 7% of BC's travellers, while 6% of travellers paid a visit to Northern British Columbia. Cariboo Chilcotin Coast saw the fewest visitors at just 2% of the provincial total.

The third quarter of 2006 was the busiest in all regions with the exception of Cariboo Chilcotin Coast where the second quarter saw the greatest influx of visitors. However, preference for same-day versus overnight travel shifted throughout the year. During the first and fourth quarters, same-day travel accounted for 53% of total person-visits while overnight stays accounted for 60% of visits during the second and third quarters of 2006.

[3] As the results of the TSRC are primarily sponsored and used by various tourism boards, regions named in this section are tourism regions rather than the more commonly used development regions.

Where are visitors staying?

During the fall and winter months of the first and fourth quarters of 2006, with holiday seasons in full swing and many making time to visit with friends and family, almost two-thirds (65%) of tourists in BC stayed in private homes or cottages. In fact, regardless of the time of year, staying in private homes remained the most common form of accommodation in 2006. Other types of accommodation experienced peaks in usage during different times of the year. The third quarter was the busiest for hotel, motel, and other commercial accommodations (resorts, hunting and fishing lodges, bed & breakfasts, hostels, etc.) in 2006, with nearly 41% of total annual overnight stays recorded during that time. The idea of a "summer season" is most evident at BC's campgrounds. While campgrounds only make up slightly more than one-eighth of the province's total number of overnight stays, roughly 83% of their annual overnight visits were registered during the third quarter.

Travel Survey of Residents of Canada

Since 2005, in order to comply with the definition of tourism crafted by the World Tourism Organization more closely, the Canadian Travel Survey (CTS) has been redesigned and renamed the Travel Survey of Residents of Canada (TSRC).

The TSRC measures the size of domestic tourism in Canada from the demand side with the objective to provide information about the volume and expenditures on trips by Canadians by province of origin, destination, duration, accommodation, purpose, mode of travel, *etc.* in order to provide a socio-demographic profile of travellers and non-travellers.

The TSRC, also addresses concerns around timeliness of release and sampling that were present in the CTS.

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Email transmission information service from BC Stats

also on the Internet at www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jul 1/08	% change on one year ago
BC	4,381.6	1.7
Canada	33,311.4	1.2
GDP and INCOME (Revised Nov 6)		
(BC - at market prices)	2007	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	192,528	5.4
GDP *($ 2002 millions)*	164,583	3.0
GDP *($ 2002 per Capita) (reflects revised pop)*	38,184	1.4
Personal Disposable Income *($ 2002 per Capita)*	25,282	3.1
TRADE ($ millions, seasonally adjusted)		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Sep	3,412	2.3
Merchandise Exports - Oct	3,104	9.0
Retail Sales - Sep	4,814	1.0
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX	% change on one year ago	12-month avg % change
(all items - Oct 2008)		
BC	2.5	2.1
Vancouver	2.7	2.3
Victoria	2.6	1.7
Canada	2.6	2.5
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Nov '08	prev. month
Labour Force - BC	2,429	-0.2
Employed - BC	2,310	0.0
Unemployed - BC	119	-3.3
		Oct '08
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	4.9	5.1
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	6.3	6.2
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Dec 10/08	Dec 12/07
Prime Business Rate	3.50	6.00
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	5.60	7.20
- 5 year	6.95	7.39
US-CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Dec 10/08	Dec 12/07
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $ per US $	1.2557	1.0107
(closing rate) US $ per Cdn $	0.7939	0.9870
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Nov '08	one year ago
BC	789.82	4.8
Canada	797.73	4.4

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca

The Import Content of Exports: A British Columbia Perspective

A new study examining the import content of British Columbia's exports has been released. The removal of the import content allows for better comparison with GDP and provides insights into the value-added content of exports and the extent that firms are outsourcing production in an attempt to lower costs.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/bus_stat/trade.asp#ICE

Data and Health Mapping Browser

A new thematic mapping tool on our site will display a wide selection of BC Stats' data holdings. For a fee, BC Stats can create similar mapping tools for your organization using your own data for display on our site.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/maps/browsers.asp

2008 Small Business Profile

The 2008 edition of the Small Business Profile is now available. This report offers information on small business in British Columbia, including counts of establishments, employment, revenue, GDP and exports.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/bus_stat/busind/sm_bus.asp#sbp

2008 High Technology Input Indicators

The 2008 edition of the Input Indicators of the British Columbia High Technology Sector is now available. This report looks at the inputs to high tech and can be considered a companion report to the Profile of the BC High Technology sector, which examines the sector's outputs.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/bus_stat/busind/hi_tech.asp

Released this week by BC Stats

- Exports, October 2008

Next week

- Consumer Price Index, November 2008

BC Stats, Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services, Box 9410 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, B.C. V8W 9V1
Tel: (250) 387-0327 Fax: (250) 387-0329 Web: www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca E-mail: BC.Stats@gov.bc.ca